

2017

## [Social Work] Newsletter, 2017

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NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE  
DEPARTMENT HEAD:

# YEAR IN REVIEW

FALL 2016 - SPRING 2017



As the pages of this newsletter will tell you, the Department of Social Work has had an active year. In a climate of economic distress, we continue to find ways to improve our programs and to strengthen our community connections. This past year, the department took initial steps to forge partnerships with Seoul Women's University and Kyungpook National University. Faculty from both universities familiarized themselves with our students, faculty and program when they visited the campus in the spring. The visits were positive and we are moving forward to establish partnerships that will facilitate student and faculty exchanges.

As we begin another academic cycle, I want to recognize the great work done by our faculty and staff that makes the Department of Social Work a special place. This dedicated group works to provide the best education possible for our students and, together with our field agencies, provides quality experiences through field placements and other engaged learning activities.

Our community partners deserve our continuing gratitude. Hundreds of agencies across Iowa, the country, and the world provide hands-on education through field placements. Without the commitments of so many stakeholders, our students would not have the opportunity to apply their practice skills in real world environments. Thank you for all that you do!

I welcome your questions or comments at any time via email at [cynthia.juby@uni.edu](mailto:cynthia.juby@uni.edu) or by phone at 319-273-6249.

Cindy Juby, Ph.D.



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
University of Northern Iowa

# PROFESSOR SPOTLIGHTS



## Jenny Becker

Master of Social Work degree from the University of Nebraska Omaha. She is a Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW).

Prior to 2014, when Becker assumed her current position, her previous Cedar Valley work in human services were interesting and diverse. Past employers included Exceptional Persons Inc., the Iowa Department of Human Services in Black Hawk County, the Mental Health Institute in Independence and the Area Education Agency 1 out of Elkader. Becker noted that all these experiences paved the way to her current position at UNI.

When asked what her experience was like in the transition from her former positions to her current position as director of field instruction, Becker said, "Choosing to leave the field of direct practice with children, families, organizations and communities was not an easy one, but to have a larger impact on our client base by leaving a fingerprint, no matter how faint, on the social workers who come after me, is a gift." The attraction to the position, according to

Jenny Becker is the the director of field instruction in the Department of Social Work and a UNI alumna, having earned her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work in 1995. The following year, she was awarded her

Becker, was the opportunity to share her passion for the field and contribute to the learning of future social workers.

Becker works with both undergraduate and graduate students. Her primary responsibility is to ensure there are enough viable field placements to meet the educational needs and professional goals of their students, whether it be in Cedar Valley, in Iowa, outside the state or internationally. Becker reported that the field program averages around 115 students in the field each year. She explained, "Our undergraduate students clock in a minimum of 440 hours at each internship whereas our graduate students put in anywhere from 400-500 hours of field experience each year, for an average of over 52,000 hours of field experiences each year in our communities."

The department has recently added a Distance Education MSW Program, so Becker has been active in securing sites in more remote parts of the state to serve the needs of this student demographic. Currently, the social work field program partners with 294 sites in 72 Iowa communities. Becker said, "We are blessed with wonderful partners who work hard to provide challenging and educational field experiences to our students." This includes partnerships with other UNI programs like the Dean of Students, Classic Upward Bound, the Counseling Center, the Office of Compliance and Equity Management and Student Disability Services. Becker also coordinates resume building and interview skill development sessions for students through Career Services and the Graduate College.

In addition to overseeing field sites for internship experiences, Becker conducts field orientation sessions required by all students, preps faculty liaisons who are taking over supervision of field groups, and supports the student and the liaison throughout the field experience as needed. Becker maintains online training modules for agency supervisors to view prior to taking on a social work field student and ensures the supervisor has all the tools and supports needed to provide for a wonderful field experience for their social work intern.

Becker serves on the department's undergraduate and graduate curriculum committees, the awards and scholarships committee and the graduate admissions committee, as well as chairs the field education committee. According to Becker, "The social work department supports providing relevant and needed professional development trainings for community human service organizations to contribute to their knowledge base." Becker organizes and leads fall conferences, social work ethics trainings and LISW clinical supervision workshops.

Currently, the social work department is making plans for their first Study Abroad partnership for international internships. Last summer, Cindy Juby, Department of Social Work head, Philip Plourde, executive director of International Programs, and Becker visited Korea. According to Becker, "Following a visit to Korea last summer, we are hosting two Korean universities this year in our efforts to establish this exchange relationship."



## Matthew Vasquez PhD, LMSW

Matthew Vasquez, a newly hired professor in the social work department who is set to begin teaching this summer, is excited to be joining the UNI community. Professor Vasquez chose the social work program at UNI because he wants to be involved in the department's efforts to advance trauma-informed care throughout the state; not many social work programs offer courses on trauma, let alone have an entire program devoted to trauma-informed care like UNI does. To professor Vasquez, this was a sign that the program is aiming to move into more contemporary and cutting-edge areas of practice. He appreciates the emphasis that UNI places on quality teaching and small-class sizes, and knew that the time and effort he places into his teaching would be valuable to social work students.

Professor Vasquez received his B.A. in religion from Bowdoin College in Maine. His master's and doctorate degrees in social work are both from the University of Iowa. Professor Vasquez practiced as a therapist for many years in Iowa at the Department of Veteran Affairs, the Grace C. Mae Advocate Center and at Four Oaks. At all three agencies, professor Vasquez utilized non-directive and directive play therapy, EMDR, sand tray, mindfulness, cognitive behavioral therapy and other modalities to treat veterans, individuals, families and couples with chemical

dependency disorders, PTSD and other psychological conditions, as well as children in youth residential treatment, PMIC placements, and in the Sexual Abuse Treatment and Re-Orientation Program. Before coming to UNI, professor Vasquez was a professor in the social work department at the University of Southern Mississippi. He also serves as a DHS mentor at the University of Mississippi Child Welfare Academy as well as a research consultant at the International Trauma Center in Massachusetts. While at the University of Southern Mississippi, professor Vasquez received the "Teacher of the Year" award in both 2015 and 2016.

Professor Vasquez's research and professional experience is rooted in trauma, making the trauma-informed MSW program at UNI a perfect fit for him. His current area of research focuses on the later cognitive, emotional and social functioning of children who were adopted (either domestically or internationally) and were exposed to chronic neglect and deprivation at an early age (ages 0-3). He plans to build a body of literature that examines how such child populations regulate stress and navigate family and larger social situations in later adolescence and adulthood. His other research interests include examining the benefits of infusing trauma-informed care practices into residential treatment facilities, inpatient mental health units and school-based curricula, along with how to effectively educate social workers on the salient neurological and clinical aspects of trauma.

The Department of Social Work is pleased to have professor Vasquez join us. His expertise and focus on quality education are commendable.

## PROFESSOR HIGHLIGHTS



### Anita Gordon

- Presentation given at the CSWE Conference, November 2016
- Perceptions of Questionable Research Practices in Social Work and Other Disciplines
- Anita M. Gordon, Social Work
- Cindy Juby, Social Work
- Helen C. Harton, Psychology
- UNI Center for Academic Ethics



### Laura Parker

- Van Wormer, K. & Parker, L. (2016). Substance Abuse Treatment: A Field in the Midst of Change. In R. Rooney (Ed.), Strategies for Working With Involuntary Clients, 3th edition. New York: Columbia University Press



### Katherine van Wormer

- Published the 3rd edition of the textbooks, which is a two-volume set--Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Micro Level, and Human Behavior and the Social Environment, Macro Level (Oxford University Press)
- Co-authored the 4th edition of Addiction Treatment: A Strengths Perspective (Cengage)
- Gave a keynote presentation, "Restorative Justice and Social justice," at a social justice conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania in fall 2016
- Is retiring after 26 years in the department



### Steven Onken

- Onken is serving on the National Task Force on Specialized Trauma Competencies for Council on Social Work Education and the National Center for Social Work Trauma and Workforce Development.
- Onken is a member of the Mental Health Expert Reference Group, The Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI), The University of Adelaide, Australia. JBI is the international not-for-profit, research and development centre promoting and supporting the synthesis, transfer and utilization of evidence through identifying feasible, appropriate, meaningful and effective healthcare practices to assist in the improvement of healthcare outcomes globally.



### James McCullagh

- "Reverend Theodore Mannaseh Rights; His Sons, and the Cherokee National Male Seminary." The Chronicles of Oklahoma, Winter 2016-17, Vol. XCIV, pp. 446-457.
- Cherokee National Female Seminary Graduates: 1879-1910 (2016): Biographical Sketches of Career Single Women and their Families. Westville, OK: Goingsnake District Heritage Association.
- External Funds: Child Welfare Title IV-E Training, \$175,000.
- CSBS Outstanding Teaching Award 2015.

## ALUMNI HIGHLIGHTS



### Jordan Dunn Alumni

Jordan graduated from UNI in 2010 with a B.A. in social work and then in 2011 with an MSW. Jordan grew up in Des Moines, Iowa. Jordan currently works at Pathway Behavioral Services, splitting his time as an outreach office coordinator and a substance abuse counselor. Jordan chose to pursue both his B.A. and master's in social work because he feels personally and professionally aligned with social work's core values, including advocacy for social justice and respect for an individual's dignity and worth. He enjoys being part of a field that recognizes strengths, resiliencies and self-determination as crucial to reaching goals. When asked about the value of a social work degree, Jordan replied, "My education at UNI absolutely provided the foundation for lifelong learning and critical thinking. A social work education also allowed for exploration of different areas within the profession, in part through field placements with various agencies. For me, this helped confirm my passion for addictions treatment."



### Thomas Eachus Alumni

Tom graduated from UNI in 1980 with a B.A. in social work. Tom then went on to receive an MSW from the University of Iowa in 1985. Tom grew up in Waterloo, Iowa, and Dysart, Iowa. Tom has worked at UnityPoint Health Black Hawk Grundy Mental Health Center since 1988 and is currently the executive director. Tom is primarily an administrator, but still sees clients, does public speaking, serves on local and state workgroups, and plans meetings. He chose to pursue a degree in social work at an early age due to his fondness of interacting with people, and because he grew up with his dad being a social worker. When asked about the value of a social work degree, Tom replied, "The value of my social work education allowed me to practice in a profession that is dedicated to helping others."



# STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS



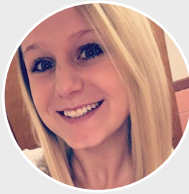
**Courtney Klein**  
Undergraduate

Courtney is currently a junior in the undergraduate social work program, in addition to majoring in political science and minoring in psychology and international affairs. Courtney is from Hospers, Iowa. She is currently the president and former secretary of the Student Social Work Association. Courtney chose social work as her major because she has a strong passion for public policy and helping empower individuals and their communities. Courtney was drawn to social work because it provides an insight into the system and applying policy. Having a social work background will help her prepare for a future working with public policy, ensuring that policy not only looks good, but it is also easy to implement in communities. After graduating, Courtney plans on pursuing a dual degree, receiving her J.D. and M.A. in either public policy or international affairs. She would love to eventually work in politics or global policy, working closely with international organizations and nonprofits.



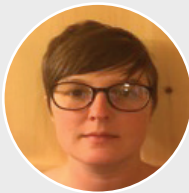
**Alli Conrad**  
MSW Student

Alli is an MSW Foundation student from Perry, Iowa. Alli is a member of the Master of Social Work Student Association and is the Foundation Chair. Alli is completing her foundation internship at Heart and Solutions, LLC., a mental health therapy agency in Mount Vernon. She is also a graduate assistant in the social work department. Alli chose to pursue a master's degree in social work in order to achieve her goal of being able to help individuals through mental health therapy. Alli chose social work over other mental health degrees due to social work's focus on communities and client's in their environment. She has a special interest in working with children with trauma. After graduating, Alli plans to become a licensed social worker and become a mental health therapist.



**Rachel Soderstrum**  
Undergraduate

Rachel is currently a senior in the undergraduate social work program. Rachel is from Adel, Iowa. Rachel is currently completing an internship with Iowa Legal Aid in Waterloo, where she is working on the Parent Representation Project. Her time spent in the social work department has given her experiences and opportunities that make her feel confident that she can accomplish her professional and career goals. Rachel chose social work as her major because she wanted to make a difference in the lives of and advocate on behalf of those that might not have the resources or knowledge to do it on their own, to better understand and interact with individuals of unique and varying backgrounds, and learn more about policies and practices. After graduating, Rachel plans to attend law school to study family law to be able to advocate for individuals at the legislative level.



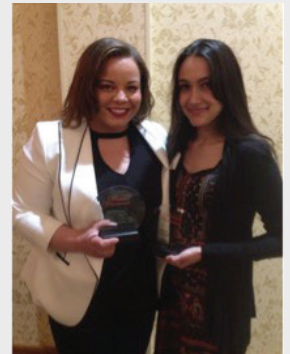
**Crecia Gohr**  
MSW Student

Crecia is an MSW Advanced Standing student from Charles City, Iowa. Crecia is completing her advanced standing internship at Prairie Ridge Integrated Behavioral Healthcare in Mason City, which provides three levels of service to individuals who suffer from addictions to substances and gambling. Crecia has experience in the outpatient unit as well as in the women's residential retreat. She also has had the opportunity to perform evaluations, counsel clients and facilitate a group. Crecia chose to pursue a master's degree in social work to expand the experiences she received in her bachelor's social work program. After graduating, she will be staying at Prairie Ridge. Crecia plans on receiving supervision to become an LISW.

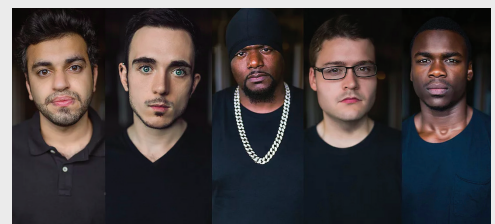


Sydney Neuzil is a senior who will graduate with a bachelor's degree in social work. Sydney was nominated to receive a volunteer award from the mayor of Waterloo for her volunteer work in the Department of Human Services. Sydney received her award at a ceremony on April 11.

Two of our social work students were nominated and awarded the YWCA of Black Hawk County's Cedar Valley Women of Persimmon awards during the April 25, 2017, ceremony. Laticia Aossey (right) is an undergraduate social work student who won the "Volunteer" award for her work with foster care youth. Vanessa McNeal (left) is a graduate social work student who won the "Young Woman of Tomorrow" award for her presentations and films that raise awareness to sexual violence and its impact on survivors. In addition, Gwenne Berry and Susan Hill were nominated for the "Professional Women" award.



Vanessa McNeal, a graduate student in the social worker department, screened her third film, "The Voiceless," at UNI on April 5. The film was also screened at Iowa State University and the University of Iowa. "The Voiceless" features the stories of five male survivors of sexual violence. The film challenge's viewers beliefs about masculinity, sexual violence and who it happens to. Following the screening, Vanessa and three of the film subjects participated in a panel discussion.



# STUDENT SERVICES

## Social Work Student Association (BA students)

The undergraduate Student Social Work Association (SSWA) promotes the education and involvement of students. SSWA actively volunteers on and off campus. In the past year, SSWA members have volunteered with NorthCrest, the Northeast Iowa Food Bank, NewAldaya and the Special Olympics. SSWA encourages its members to gain professional skills and connect with faculty members. This semester, we hosted a resume workshop with Career Services, educating members on how to create a resume. SSWA also hosted Cindy Juby and guests from the Seoul Women's University who described UNI's relationship with their program. SSWA is hoping to schedule more volunteer events before the semester ends!



From left to right: Bobbi Metcalf (senior, secretary), Taylor Bengt (sophomore, treasurer), McKenna Keck (senior, student representative), Cylea Ahlf (senior, co-president), Courtney Klein (junior, co-president), Blake Johnson (junior)



## Masters of Social Work Student Association

The MSWSA is a student-run organization dedicated to promoting academic, professional and personal growth of MSW students throughout their time at the university. The MSWSA participates in community outreach and service projects and organizes social events for students to communicate with cohorts. The MSWSA aims to bring all members of the MSW program together in order to build a stronger, more unified program. This association is responsive and flexible to students' interests and concerns.

Fall semester 2016 we provided a learning opportunity and presented the documentary, "Paper Tigers," that follows struggling teens and their teachers who utilize a new approach to teaching. We also sponsor Monarch Therapy Services as an association and helped with their Foster Care Boards Christmas Event. Here, we helped foster kids with crafts, seeing Santa and picking out presents! Spring semester 2017, we helped at Monarch Therapy Service's event, "I am at my Wit's End, Nothing I do Seems to Work." This workshop hosted Holly van Gulden as a speaker and provided valuable information on effective parenting skills. The MSWSA is currently working on bringing in local speakers for the 2017-18 academic year. If interested in joining the student association, please contact Rebecca Brown at [brownrnx@uni.edu](mailto:brownrnx@uni.edu).



Back row Left to right: Kellsey Forest (Foundation student, vice president), Abbey Jenkins (Foundation student, secretary), Dylan Clapp (Foundation student, treasurer) Front row left to right: Blair Brashears (Foundation student, student representative), Rebecca Brown (Foundation student, president), Allison Conrad (Foundation student, Foundation chair) Not pictured: Josie Witt: Advanced Standing student, social media chair and fundraising chair



# AWARDS CEREMONY

The Department of Social Work held its annual Awards and Scholarships Ceremony on Wednesday, April 19, 2017. Faculty, staff, students, university and community partners, friends and family members came together to recognize the impressive achievements of our undergraduate and graduate students. The recipients of each scholarship or award are listed below.

## B.A. Scholarships and Awards:

**Ruth Bluford Anderson Social Work Scholarship -**

Makeba Scott and Leon Shears

**Diane H. Schaeffer Scholarship -**

Aspen Olsen and Melissa Seaback

**Mary L. Padovan Endowed School Social Work Scholarship -**

Montesha Carter, Damian Klinkenberg and Kelsey Marxen

**Robert A. Schneider Award for Excellence in Leadership -**

McKenna Keck

**Substance Abuse Counseling Award -**

Katherine Neeson

**Anna McCullagh Memorial Endowed Scholarship -**

Laticia Aossey, Rebekah Stevens and Megan Tomson

**Dr. James McCullagh Award for Academic Excellence -**

Kristin Russell

## M.S.W. Scholarships and Awards:

**Robert Runkle Endowed Scholarship in Social Work -**

Beth Bardonner and Ashley Knerr

**Outstanding Graduate Research Paper Award -**

Elizabeth Jacobs

**Outstanding Graduate Service Award -**

Eric Eastman

The UNI SW department successfully places over 100 field students each year. This cannot be accomplished without the dedication, commitment and expertise of our partners in the community. In the Cedar Valley alone, we partner with over 80 sites for student internship experiences. During the ceremony, three of those partners were recognized for their contributions to our program:

The **Waterloo Community School District** provides family outreach services in each of their 12 elementary buildings through Family Support Workers, who serve as liaisons between home and school. They assist parents with basic needs to enable their children to come to school ready to learn. They also help parents and families resolve personal concerns, make educational choices, improve family relations and access resources for assistance. They are the "village" that raises our community youth. We are grateful to have them as internship partners.

The **YWCA of Black Hawk County** is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. Their vision is that all Cedar Valley women and girls become strong leaders and instruments of change, creating opportunities and providing resources so that all may reach their fullest potential. Student interns receive direct experience with youth, parents and seniors, as well cultural exposure through YWCA programs involving Latino, Burmese and Congolese populations. We are honored to be a part of this legacy.

The mission of the **Waterloo Commission on Human Rights** is to protect and promote the personal dignity of all Waterloo citizens and eliminate discriminatory barriers at home, work or in the community. It seeks to make compliance and education a meaningful and visible strategy as it works toward eliminating the effects of discriminatory practices in the City of Waterloo. Internship students learn how the commission conducts investigations based upon local, state, and federal laws and statutes. Students also witness the effects of such discriminatory practices on individuals and communities. The commission encourages vibrant community-based social work practice, as students become advocates for policies, regulations and laws, which serve to eradicate systemic racism in local, state and national systems. We are proud to include the commission in our list of community partners.



## IN THE FIELD

At this very moment, there are people only you can reach... and differences only you can make.

-Mike Dooley



**Jenny Becker**  
Director of Field Instruction

Having a successful field program is a result of a collective of efforts by many different working parts. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the collective that make the difference between a good field program and a great field program. From the front office staff, who may be the first face of our program that prospective students see, to the faculty who teach introductory courses that start the stir the desire of future social workers, to the faculty who teach practice, policy and diversity courses that continue to fan the flame of social, economic and environmental justice embedded in our students, to the faculty liaisons who oversee our field placements, to the agency instructors who provide mentorship and professional guidance to the next generation of social workers, and to the students who have the courage to extend their hands to the populations and communities in need.

The number of students continues to grow. From May 2016 through May 2017, we placed 68 undergraduate social work field students and 71 graduate social work field students. This is the most students in field at one time in the history of the program. We are blessed to have wonderful field partners in 87 Iowa communities, offering opportunities for our students in 328 sites.

## AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

The UNI Social Work Field Office would like to take this opportunity to profile two agency supervisors, nominated by the Department and Social Work interns.

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**Julie Gondek**

LISW, Therapist and Internship Coordinator,  
Heart and Solutions, Grundy Center, IA

Julie's MSW intern for the 2016-17 school year, Alli Conrad, wanted to recognize Julie's contribution to her training in the social work field through observing and co-leading therapy sessions with clients, and understanding insurance, policy issues and other administrative tasks associated with private practice. Under Julie's supervision, Alli was able to learn about professional conduct and ethics and felt her engagement, assessment, intervening and evaluating skills were enhanced through this field experience. Furthermore, Alli shared "Julie always made sure I was comfortable and getting what I wanted out of my internship experience. Julie is very approachable and I have no problem coming to her with questions or issues. Julie constantly allowed time for me to ask questions, process things or learn more about the profession."

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**Marcus Brewer**

LBSW, Grant Coordinator, Waterloo Community Schools'  
Climate Transformation Program, Waterloo, IA

Marcus Brewer has spent the last 8 years at EXPO Alternative Learning Center in Waterloo, where he assisted students with individualized learning opportunities to address their educational needs in a safe and nurturing environment. On a daily basis, Marcus assisted students, families and staff to address and overcome the barriers to a student's educational success. This school year, Marcus was promoted to the role of grant coordinator for the Waterloo Community Schools' Climate Transformation Program. This program supports a sustainable, multi-tiered system of support focusing on safe, healthy and caring learning environments that include well defined systems, practices and data at each tier, resulting in improved behavioral and academic outcomes. In addition to the demands of his positions within the Waterloo Community School System, Marcus still finds time to supervise undergraduate social work students for their requirement field experiences.

Marcus, also a UNI B.A. social work alumnus, shares that his undergraduate social work program at UNI prepared him for the role of a change agent. "My UNI professors made it clear to me that we were to examine systems and actively look for ways to improve service delivery and client outcomes. This skill has served me well in my 23 plus years of social work."

Marcus shares that in his current position, he is actively attempting to build efficient, equitable learning environments for all students and spends a lot of time assessing, evaluating and looking for continuous quality improvement from all 18 school buildings in the Waterloo Community School District.





DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK  
**University of Northern Iowa**

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## TRAUMA INFORMED CONFERENCE

The theme of the Fifth Annual Trauma Informed Conference, "Strengthening Resiliency to Mitigate ACEs," was a joint effort of the three Regent Universities and the state of Iowa. Presenters included Dr. Resmiye Oral from the University of Iowa, Dr. Matthew Vasquez from the University of Northern Iowa, Janet Horras from Iowa Department of Public Health, and Leah Vejzovic from Iowa State and the Department of Human Services.

Dr. Vasquez, a new faculty member at UNI, will offer advanced workshops that build on this conference during the 2017-18 academic year. If you would like more information about the workshops, you can visit the Department of Social Work website at [csbs.uni.edu/socialwork](http://csbs.uni.edu/socialwork).

